

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A remote copy system, comprising:

first and second primary storage subsystems, the first primary storage subsystem including a first primary volume, the second primary storage subsystem including a second primary volume, the first and second primary volumes storing a plurality of write data in a given order;

an intermediate storage subsystem coupled to the first and second primary storage subsystems and configured to synchronously receive the write data from the first and second primary storage subsystems, the intermediate storage subsystem including a write-order-information provider that is configured to generate write-order information for the write data received from the first and second primary storage subsystems, the write-order information provider comprising a counter that generates a sequence number forming part of the write-order information, the write-order information being associated with the write data received from the first and second primary storage subsystems, the write-order information reflecting the given order of storage of the write data in the first and second primary storage subsystems, wherein the intermediate storage subsystem includes first and second intermediate volumes defined as a consistency group within which data integrity is guaranteed, the first intermediate volume being configured to receive the write data from the first primary volume, the second intermediate volume being configured to receive the write data from the second primary volume, wherein the intermediate storage subsystem is not directly coupled to a host unit; and

first and second secondary storage subsystems coupled to the intermediate storage subsystem and configured to asynchronously receive the write data from the intermediate storage subsystem, the first secondary storage subsystem including a first secondary volume that is configured to mirror the first primary volume of the first primary storage subsystem which is a

separate storage subsystem from the intermediate storage subsystem, the second secondary storage subsystem including a second secondary volume that is configured to mirror the second primary volume of the second primary storage subsystem which is a separate storage subsystem from the intermediate storage subsystem, wherein the write data are stored in the first and second secondary storage subsystems according to the write order information associated with the write data as generated by the write-order-information provider of the intermediate storage subsystem which is a separate storage subsystem from the first primary storage subsystem having the first primary volume and the second primary storage subsystem having the second primary volume;  
and

a valid counter forming part of the intermediate storage subsystem, the valid counter being configured to keep the highest sequence number of the write data that is ready to be validated for copying at the secondary subsystems,

wherein the intermediate storage subsystem transmits a request to prepare the write data and transmits a request to validate the write data which has been prepared according to the prepare request, based on a value of the valid counter.

2-5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) The remote copy system of claim 4, further comprising:  
first and second primary bitmaps provided at the first and second primary subsystems, respectively;

first and second intermediate bitmaps provided at the intermediate subsystem; and  
first and second secondary bitmaps provided at the first and second secondary subsystems, respectively,

wherein the first and second primary bitmaps are associated with the first intermediate bitmap and the first and second secondary bitmaps are associated with the second intermediate bitmap,

wherein the bitmaps are used during a resynchronization process to determine and copy only data have been changed since suspension of mirroring of a paired volumes.

7. (Original) The remote copy system of claim 3, wherein the intermediate subsystem including a journal volume to receive the write data from the first and second primary subsystems.

8. (Original) The remote copy system of claim 1, wherein the first and second primary subsystems are disk array units.

9. (Original) The remote copy system of claim 1, wherein the primary subsystems are provided at a primary site and the secondary subsystems are provided at a secondary site, the primary site including a primary host, the secondary site including a secondary host,

wherein the secondary subsystems are configured to replace the primary subsystems as primary storage areas if either the primary subsystems or the primary host experiences failure or is taken off line.

10. (Currently amended) An intermediate storage subsystem provided in a remote copy system and coupled to a plurality of primary storage subsystems and coupled to a plurality of secondary subsystems, the intermediate storage subsystem comprising:

a first intermediate storage area configured to receive write data from at least one primary subsystem which is a separate storage subsystem from the intermediate storage subsystem, the write data being received synchronously from the at least one primary subsystem, the first intermediate storage area defined as a consistency group with which data integrity is guaranteed; and

a write-order-information provider configured to generate write-order information for the write data received from the at least one primary subsystem, the write-order information being associated with the write data; and

a valid counter provided in the intermediate subsystem, the valid counter being configured to keep the highest sequence number of the write data that is ready to be validated for copying at the secondary subsystems,

wherein the write-order information is used to store the write data in at least one of the secondary subsystems which is a separate storage subsystem from the intermediate storage subsystem, so that the at least one secondary subsystem mirrors the at least one primary subsystem,

wherein the intermediate storage subsystem transmits a request to prepare the write data and transmits a request to validate the write data which has been prepared according to the prepare request, based on a value of the valid counter, and

wherein the intermediate storage subsystem is not directly coupled to a host unit.

11. (Original) The storage subsystem of claim 10, wherein the first storage area is configured to receive first and second write data from the at least one primary subsystem in a given order, the first and second write data being provided with first and second write order information, respectively, by the intermediate subsystem,

wherein the first and second write data are stored in the at least one secondary subsystem according to the given order using the first and second write order information.

12. (Original) The storage subsystem of claim 10, wherein the write-order-information provides is a counter configured to generate sequence numbers, the generated sequence numbers being associated with the write data according to an order the write data are received from the at least one primary subsystem.

13. (Original) The storage subsystem of claim 10, wherein the first storage area is a journal volume that is configured to receive write data from the plurality of primary subsystems.

14. (Previously presented) The storage subsystem of claim 10, further comprising:

a second storage area,

wherein the plurality of primary subsystems including a first primary volume provided in a first primary subsystem, and a second primary volume provided in a second primary subsystem,

wherein the first and second storage areas are first and second intermediate volumes, the first intermediate volume being configured to receive write data from the first primary volume and the second intermediate volume being configured to receive write data from the second primary volume,

wherein the first intermediate volume is configured to send the write data received from the first primary volume to a first secondary volume provided in a first secondary subsystem and the second intermediate volume is configured to send the write data received from the second primary volume to a second secondary volume provided in a second secondary subsystem.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Original) The storage subsystem of claim 14, further comprising:  
first and second primary bitmaps provided at the first and second primary subsystems, respectively;

first and second intermediate bitmaps provided at the intermediate subsystem; and  
first and second secondary bitmaps provided at the first and second secondary subsystems, respectively,

wherein the first and second primary bitmaps are associated with the first intermediate bitmap and the first and second secondary bitmaps are associated with the second intermediate bitmap,

wherein the bitmaps are used during a resynchronization process to determine and copy only data have been changed since suspension of mirroring of a paired volumes.

17. (Original) The storage subsystem of claim 16, wherein the first and second secondary volumes are configured to mirror the first and second primary volumes, respectively,

wherein the write data are received from the primary subsystems at the intermediate subsystem synchronously,

wherein the write data are transmitted to the secondary subsystem from the intermediate subsystem asynchronously.

18. (Original) The storage subsystem of claim 10, wherein the intermediate storage subsystem is a disk array unit.

19. (Currently amended) A method for operating a remote copy system, the method comprising:

receiving first write data from a first primary storage subsystem at an intermediate storage subsystem which is a separate storage subsystem from the first primary storage subsystem, the first write data being sent by the first primary subsystem synchronously;

associating first write order information to the first write data at the intermediate storage subsystem, the intermediate storage subsystem including intermediate volumes defined as a consistency group within which data integrity is guaranteed;

receiving second write data from a second primary storage subsystem at the intermediate subsystem which is a separate storage subsystem from the second primary storage subsystem, the second write data being sent by the second primary subsystem synchronously;

associating second write order information to the second write data at the intermediate storage subsystem;

transmitting asynchronously the first write data and the first write order information to a first secondary storage subsystem which is a separate storage subsystem from the intermediate storage subsystem; and

transmitting asynchronously the second write data and the second write order information to a second secondary storage subsystem which is a separate storage subsystem from the intermediate storage subsystem;

transmitting a request to prepare the first, second, and third write data for storage in the first and second secondary subsystems, the prepare request being transmitted to the first

and second secondary subsystems from the intermediate subsystem, the prepare request including a reference sequence number; and

transmitting a request to validate the write data that have been prepared according to the prepare request, the validate request being transmitted to the first and second secondary subsystems from the intermediate subsystem and identifying the write data to be prepared,

validating the write data with the sequence numbers that are less than or equal to the reference sequence number;

wherein the first and second write data are stored in the first and second secondary subsystems, respectively, according to the first and second write order information, and

wherein the intermediate storage subsystem is not directly coupled to a host unit.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, further comprising:

receiving synchronously third write data from the first primary subsystem at the intermediate storage subsystem, the third write data being received at the intermediate subsystem after the first write data;

associating the third write data with third write order information;

transmitting asynchronously the third write data and the third write order information to the first secondary subsystem,

wherein the first and third write data have the same destination address, the destination address identifying a storage area in the first secondary subsystem,

wherein the first and third write order information is used to store the first write data to the identified storage area prior to storing the third write data to the identified storage area.

21-23. (Canceled)